BCPharma Newsletter

November 24, 2004
04-011
Page 1 of 2

Published by PharmaCare to provide information for British Columbia's community pharmacists.
Please circulate among dispensing staff.

In this issue:

Update Regarding VIOXX® Reimbursement Process 1
Assigning Personal Health Numbers (PHNs) 2

Update Regarding VIOXX® Reimbursement Process

PharmaCare would like to clarify the process for Vioxx® reimbursement for pharmacies.

It is our understanding that the number of returns per pharmacy is small; however, due to concerns raised by the BC Pharmacy Association (BCPhA) that the procedure is onerous and carries a potential administrative burden, PharmaCare would like to advise that the recall process contained in PharmaCare Newsletter 04-010 of October 27, 2004, is not mandatory.

It is, however, PharmaCare's preferred process for recording Vioxx® returns. As outlined in the earlier newsletter, the return process ensures that:

- the patient's medication profile remains accurate;
- the patient's accumulation towards their deductible remains correct; and
- exact records are available to Merck Frosst and for pharmacy reimbursement.

Message from Merck Frosst:

Pharmacies choosing this method should continue to process Vioxx® refunds according to the original Merck Frosst policy letter of October 6th and clearly indicate on the log form that they are using the PharmaCare return process. For each return for which PharmaCare has paid a portion of the original cost, the amount in the "paid by government" column will be subjected to the same methodology used to determine patient refunds, based on PharmaCare's share of the pro-rated amount of returned tablets and the total cost of the original prescription. Merck Frosst will complete this calculation on your behalf and will refund this additional amount directly to the pharmacy.

Please note that all reimbursement requests and Vioxx® returns must be completed by November 30, 2004.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Merck Frosst directly.

Assigning Personal Health Numbers (PHNs)

Accurate assignment of PHNs ensures that a patient's correct, complete and up-to-date health information (including their medication history) is available to all BC health care providers. Proper assignment of PHNs also provides accurate demographic information that enables provincial ministries, health authorities, hospitals, clinics, agencies such as the BC Cancer Agency, and other organizations, to direct health resources where they are needed most.

In recent months, there has been a sharp increase in pharmacy-assigned PHNs with the following problems:

- Duplicate PHN.
- First name missing.
- Incorrectly typed first name or surname.
- Invalid name (e.g., name of the pharmacy instead of the patient or a first name of "Dr").
- First name and surname reversed.
- Invalid characters, such as punctuation, in the first name (e.g., "Adler, Susan.R").
- PHN issued for an animal.

The Ministry of Health Services contacts pharmacies for accurate information and resolves these problems as quickly as possible; however, if the volume of errors continues to increase, correction may be delayed.

Please keep the following in mind whenever you assign a new PHN:

- Be sure to obtain proper identification from the patient.
- Perform a thorough search to ensure the patient has not already been assigned a PHN (for instance, on an earlier visit to the province).
- Check the spelling of both the first and last name with the spelling on the patient's identification.
- Type carefully and verify that the name you have entered is accurate.
- Do not add punctuation to a name field.
- Never assign a PHN to an animal.
- Do not create a PHN for your pharmacy—for office use medications, use your O-Med PHN.

Please download a copy of the Personal Health Number (PHN) Quick Reference Card

The information it provides will assist you in performing a search for an existing PHN and in accurately assigning a PHN when warranted.